



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Urban Transportation Commission

Recommendation Number 20210907-02B part 1:

[Taxicab Franchise Transition to Operating Authority]

WHEREAS, The purpose of the board is to serve as an advisory body to the City Council, the City Manager, and all other 11 transportation-related departments concerning transportation-related matters including: transportation energy conservation matters grant applications; streets and highways; bus and rail service; pedestrian and bikeway programs and projects; safety related programs and projects; provision for the needs of the mobility impaired; transportation franchise requests, renewals, rate adjustments, and hours of operation;

WHEREAS, The City of Austin Urban Transportation Commission (UTC) is allowed to review and make recommendations to the City Council on all requests for taxicab permits, including annual permits and franchise permits per Urban Transportation Commission Bylaws ;

WHEREAS Taxicab companies were first licensed in the City of Austin under an operating authority model on March 8th, 1932;

WHEREAS, On June 8th, 1950 taxicab companies were declared public utilities by City Council and formed into taxicab franchises by subsequent ordinance;

WHEREAS, Taxicab Companies reached their peak service in 2016/2017 with over 3 million trips and more than 1500 taxicabs deployed within the City

WHEREAS, In 2017 Transportation Network Companies such as Uber and Lyft began operating in Austin under state regulatory authority and taxicab franchises experienced an eventual seventy five percent decline in their number of trips the following year

WHEREAS, In 2018 Council approved ATD's taxicab franchise regulatory reform recommendations, intended to address this decline, lighten franchise restrictions, and level the playing field between taxicabs and other transportation options

WHEREAS, In 2020/2021 due to the global pandemic, taxicab franchises have now experienced the lowest trip numbers on record

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, the UTC supports Austin Transportation Department's recommendation that taxicab companies no longer be regarded as public utilities, but rather as a valuable part of a

diverse and ever evolving network of competitive mobility options and that Council transition taxicabs from a franchise licensing model to an operating authority licensing model.

Date of Approval: 9/7/21

Record of the vote: 11-0 unanimous vote. No abstentions

Attest:

Christopher Parks

Christopher Parks, Staff Liaison